

ents in church history. No doubt this is a worthwhile venture, but it makes both the biblical witness and record of the church appear more ambiguous about religions than it is. One also finds similar interpretive clues in the way he interprets Scripture, as well as the labels he uses to categorize various theologians (ecclesiocentrists, christocentrists, theocentrists).

A second question revolves around the content of a theology of religions. For Kärkkäinen, the parameters are made up of two basic affirmations: “God desires all people to be saved,” and “only in Jesus Christ can salvation be found” (26-27). He believes that how one puts these two affirmations together determines one’s theology of religions. In much of what follows (not all) this clue guides his choice of material to include in his survey. Are these really the two most important affirmations for a theology of religions? No doubt these two affirmations are an important part of a theology of religions, but if one were to analyze, say, J. H. Bavinck’s and Hendrik Kraemer’s theologies of religions, these would not be the most important issues at all. Along with the finality of Jesus Christ, God’s revelation in creation and the response of humanity to that revelation, the religious core of religions and their cohesive unity would be much more prominent. These issues are not absent in Kärkkäinen’s treatment, but they remain in the background.

Finally, this question about this kind of book: Can one do justice to the complexities and nuances of biblical interpretation, ecclesial traditions, and individual theologians in one book? Kärkkäinen is well aware of the problem, and I have already affirmed the value of this kind of survey that maps out various positions. One must be aware, however, when reading the book that such breadth does not allow for nuanced treatment. One becomes aware of this especially when reading the description of a theologian one knows well. I was left with many questions after reading the summaries of Kraemer and Newbigin, the two thinkers I know best. The genius of Kraemer’s position expressed best in his term *subversive fulfillment* does not come through. Newbigin’s very insightful handling of world religions and religious pluralism in a number of articles in the last two decades of the twentieth century is virtually ignored; it is his project of mission in Western culture, dealing more with culture and epistemology, that is the focus of attention. Questions of this sort though, will arise as a matter of course in reading a book that surveys vast amounts of material and covers many movements, traditions, and thinkers. Generally Kärkkäinen has surveyed the scene well. One just needs this final caution to remember that no summary can handle all the intricacies, or perhaps even take hold of the genius of a position.

—Michael W. Goheen

The Lord’s Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship by Jeffrey J. Meyers. Moscow, Ida.: Canon Press, 2003, Pp. 448. \$21.00 paper.

Books and essays about worship written by conservative Presbyterians are often predictable: The congregation should follow the dictates (called “The Regulative

Principle”) of *The Westminster Confession, The Directory of the Public Worship of God*, and the writings and practices of the early Puritans. The chief mandate of the Regulative Principle teaches that one may do in worship only what God has commanded in the Bible. Thus, God has not commanded us to sing hymns or to display flowers in the sanctuary, and therefore those are forbidden, as are most worship ceremonies. Because most evangelicals (and many Presbyterians) do not follow those dictates, they are rebuked severely and extensively.

Jeffrey Meyers is a conservative Presbyterian and does his share of scolding, but his book differs radically from the more traditional defenders of the Regulative Principle. He devotes a separate essay to the Regulative Principle (chapter 16), setting forth his very different interpretation. However, more telling is Meyers’ “Bibliographic Essay” (chapter 22). Besides a few Presbyterian and Reformed authors, one finds him just as eager to learn from and borrow from Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and especially Lutheran sources. Louis Boyer, Alexander Schmemmann, and Frank Senn appear cheek by jowl with John Calvin, Hugh Old, and Robert Rayburn. (I wish that Meyers had also discovered Dutch Reformed authors such as Howard Hageman and Nicholas Wolterstorff).

The book is divided into three sections: (1) “The Divine Service of Covenant Renewal: A Biblical and Theological Orientation,” (2) “The Lord’s Service Explained,” and (3) “Essays on Worship and Liturgical Theology.”

The followers of John Calvin and John Knox have often referred to worship as “covenant renewal.” (John Stek once warned that even though the concept of the covenant is a crucial element in Reformed theology, one must be careful not to elevate it to the “key thematic concept” in Reformed dogmatics. [“‘Covenant’ Overload in Reformed Theology,” *CTJ* 29, 1994]. I am not certain if he would judge Meyers guilty of this error.) At any rate, few have plumbed the concept of covenant renewal as deeply as Meyers, especially the theme of offering-sacrifice. He describes and analyzes the various sacrifices in the Old Testament and the role they played in Israel’s worship. He then takes the crucial step of “transferring” the offerings to the Christian dispensation and Christian worship. Of course, the transfer is by way of transmutation—the offerings have been made new through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and worship now is clearly shaped by a trinitarian framework.

In part 2, the author elucidates this transmutation by outlining and then explicating the order of worship as practiced in his congregation, Providence Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA). The service consists of the following elements: The Entrance, The Sin Offering, The Ascension Offering, The Tribute Offering, and The Peace Offering.

At first glance, these elements appear unusual and the rubrics unfamiliar.

Perhaps the author’s mining of Old Testament ritual has produced a unique pattern of Reformed worship. However, upon closer examination, it appears that the service at Providence is not that much different from that proposed by

the Liturgical Committee of the Christian Reformed Church in 1968, or as practiced in my home church, or followed in many congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA), even though the nomenclature is often different. In these churches the service parts may be called: Approaching Our Lord, Confession and Renewal, God's Word, Response to God's Word, Going Forth—or similar rubrics.

What is one to make of this? Were the 149 pages of biblical and theological orientation really necessary for arriving at a Reformed liturgy that turns out to be similar to that of many other Presbyterian and Reformed churches? Has Meyers (as do many authors) overestimated the uniqueness of his approach? Here are two thoughts:

Fist, I found Meyers' "Biblical and Theological Orientation" extremely insightful and helpful. He has read widely and deeply in biblical studies, theology, and liturgical studies, and has been able to cast his views into an articulate Reformed liturgical theology. Students and scholars of liturgics will benefit from the many insights. The order of service used at Providence Church is well reasoned and contains the essentials of Christian worship in a coherent sequence. (Some of the terminology is less than helpful. For example, the "Ascension Offering" may echo Old Testament worship but requires too much explication to have it "fit" into Christian worship.) Meyers insists on a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, which is, of course, thoroughly Calvinian (although not Calvinistic).

Second, the fact that many Reformed and Presbyterian churches use similar orders of worship, but do not draw as explicitly on Old Testament practices, suggests that there are other biblical insights and emphases that can lead to genuine Christian, Reformed worship practices. (Meyers acknowledges that more liberal Presbyterian churches have often done better in liturgical studies and practice than more conservative churches.)

Of course, in a book of over four hundred pages, the reader is bound to disagree with some views and emphases. Although Meyers' critique of many worship practices in evangelical and Presbyterian congregations is often justified, the tone of the criticism is frequently too harsh and judgmental. I also do not share Meyers' view on the role of women in ecclesiastical office (or, rather, the lack of role) and therefore in worship. Moreover, I would grant a much larger role to laypeople in worship, both in planning and in leading the service. Meyers' elevation of the minister's role comes close to being sacerdotal. I wonder why he does not give the prophet Joel his due—sons and daughters, both men and women will prophesy (see Acts 2:17-18 and 1 Cor. 11:15). In addition, Paul's description of early Christian worship hints at a much wider "congregational participation" than Meyers allows (1 Cor. 14:20-23).

A final comment concerns the intended audience of the book. In some ways, Meyers is directing his thesis at all Protestant churches, especially the evangelical wing. At other times, the book sounds "in-house," dealing with issues in the